American Antiquities,

Although but little is known of them, America, as well as her older sisters, can boast of ruins which, while they cannot be compared with those of Egypt, Greece, Rome, and other ancient countries, in grandeur and magnificence, yet tend to show that this continent must have been inhabited by a these fishes are supposed, from race or tribe of people in a tar more their shape and extraordinary advanced state of civilization than that in which Columbus and the early discoverers tound them. In many parts of the country are found ruins which go to prove

In New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin and many other States, are large mounds which appear to have been used as burial places. And in these mounds are found many relics and coins which apparently had gone out of use before the arrival of Columbus.

Some of the largest ruins are found in the far West. In the towns and canyons of Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico are dwellings and temples of a race of men who had mastered some of the arts of civil ization. In the plains are pastoral villages built of stone and mortar, for both shelter and defence. The houses are quite large, sufficient for a number of people to live in, with a courtyard in the center. There are no side entrances, and ingress was had by ladders over the walls and into the courtyard.

These cities or towns contain

circular towers of great strength, constructed with circular walls, and a court in the center. The walls are joined by radial partitions, thus strengthening the whole. Most of these towers are very much dilapidated, so that it is impossible to ascertain whether they were roofed or not. It is thought that they were entered by a secret rock cut passage, as at least one such passage has been discovered. It has also been thought by scientific men that these towers were temples of the Sun, in the center of which the eternal fire was kept burning, and it is even quite probable that the towers might have been used for defence in sore extremity, the people entering them by the secret passages. The double and sometimes triple walls would discourage an enemy armed as they were in those days with nothing but bows and clubs. As dangers thickened about these people, or per-haps in their earlier history, tortified dwellings were grouped in the caves formed in the soft rocks in the perpendicular cliffs of the canyons. These cliff dwellings must have been constructed with enormous labor, as the stone and earth was either carried or hoisted from below. The approaches were by steps cut into the rock and were very dangerous. In the outer stone walls were a few small square openings for air and light, while the mode of entrance was by ladders over the wall.

The cliff fortresses are of great antiquity. The cedar wood used for beams is, however, quite well preserved. Broken pottery in considerable quantities may be found scattered about these ruins. The mortar with which the stones are laid is still firm, and in some places are seen the print of human hands made when the mortar was first laid on.

The true history of these ruined towers and fortresses will in all probability never be known. It is some satisfaction, however, to know that America has ruins of great and valuable interest.

Age of the Earth.—The latest contribution to the question of the age of the earth comes from Mr. J. G. Goodchild, of H. M. Geological Survey, in the form of a presidential address delivered before the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, and just published in the Society's Proceedings (Session exxvi., 1896-97). Many geologists have attempted to estimate the length of the interval between the present time and the period when the oldest strata containing lossils were laid down; and "vague, indefinite, but unquestionably vast | bathes her infant. Then he left beyond conception" have been the conclusions. Mr. Goodchild passes in review certain changes which another savage beast from the desare known to have taken place in ert had not Pezon drawn him off the past, working backwards from the Glacial Period, and estimates the time required for the formation of the rocks of the various geological periods. He concludes that ninety-three millions of years have elapsed since the commencement of the Tertiary Period, and seven hundred millions of years since the commencement of the Cambrian Period. Moreover, the beginning of life upon the earth may be as much further back from Cambrian times as Cambrian times are removed from our own, so that the total estimate assumes tremendous proportions.-Nature.

JEWISH ACTORS OUTSIDE THE PALE. - A peculiar Jewish question is now under discussion. In accordance with old custom all Russian actors meet once a year in Moscow, where they arrange with the various managers of theatres their engagement for the ensuing twelve months. As there are many Tewish actors whose residence Moscow is prohibited, the Russian Actors' Association petitioned the Governor General of Moscow to allow their Jewish colleagues to remain in the city during the period of their meeting. But soon after another question arose: What is to become of Jewish actors who have accepted engagements in towns outside of the it up; hence the term couvreleu, Pale? The Actors' Association has, therefore, addressed another also serviceable in obliging the petition to the Government in people to keep in their houses, and which they point out that in the interests of arts and the prosperity streets. It is believed that there of theatres, Jews should be per- is no historical authority for the mitted to accept engagements everywhere; otherwise numerous exhibited by the Conqueror in entowns would have to remain with- forcing obedience to the curfew out complete dramatic companies. | was more particularly designed to The matter has been referred to the prevent English from assembling Minister of the Interior. — Jewish in secret to plan schemes of rebellion against their Norman lords.

A NEW RIBBON FISH FROM THE COAST OF OREGON.—The ribbon fishes are among the most interesting and least known of the many remarkable fishes inhabiting the depths of the sea. Their large size, fragility and habits make them very rare in collections. Their shape is band-like; they are sometimes 20 feet long and only 10 or 12 inches deep, the thickness of the body being but a few inches. By some ichthyological writers, length, to be the basis of the "sea serpent" yarns. When they reach the surface of the water the expansion of the contained gases causes the disintegration of their tissues, and they are consequently nearly always more or less mutilated when found. It is not known at what depth they live, and no specimens have ever been obtained by the use of the deep sea trawl or dredge. They are only discovered when floating dead at the surface or stranded on the shore. These fishes are very rare in American waters; they are not known to inhabit the waters of the western Atlantic, but have been taken on the coasts of Europe and at several places in the Pacific Ocean. On the night of July 1, 1897, a large ribbon fish was taken

in Rogue River, near Wedderburn, Oregon, at a point three-tourths of a mile above the river's mouth in water perfectly fresh. The fish was caught by being gilled in a salmon drift net, and was alive when removed from the net. It was taken to Mr. R. D. Hume, the well known salmon canner and cultivator, who recognized its rarity, but was unable to preserve it. He, however, employed an artist to make a sketch of it; took notes on its size, form, color, fins, scales, &c.; made a photograph of it; and forwarded drawing, photographic negative and information to the United States Fish Commission. The length of the fish was 6 feet 6 inches; its greatest depth was 10 inches; the largest part of the body was about 31/2 inches thick and the head was about a foot long. The flesh was very soft and flabby. The premaxillary bones were remarkably protractile, and after death readily permitted the elongation of the mouth downward until the length of the head was doubled, giving the appearance of a horse's head. The specimen was a female, containing transparent, ripe eggs, of which a vial-ful was sent to Washington. The eggs are free, buoyant and oneseventh of an inch in diameter .-Scientific American.

WASHING THE TIGER. - A good

story has been copied in the papers from La France du Nord about a

Cossack, ignorant of the French language and equally ignorant of fear, who was hired at Moscow by the lion tamer, Pezon, to clean the cages of his wild beasts. Their understanding, or misunderstanding, was arranged by means gestures and dumb show, as that unfortunate Tower of Babel hindered intelligible speech between the Frenchman and the Cossack; and Pezon thought that the man thoroughly understood what he had to do. The next morning the Tartar began his new duties by entering with bucket, sponge, and broom, not the cage of a tame beast, as his master had done, but of a splendid untamed tiger, which lay asleep upon the floor. The fierce animal awoke and fixed his eyes upon the man, who calmly proceeded to wet his large sponge, and unterrified, to approach the tiger. At this moment Pezon appeared upon the scene and was struck with horror. Any sound or motion upon his part would intensify the danger of the situation by rousing the beast to fury; so he quietly waited till the need should arise to rush to the man's assistance. The moujik, sponge in hand, approached the animal, and, perfectly fearless, proceeded to rub him down as if he had been a horse or a dog; while the tiger, apparently delighted by the application of cold water, rolled over on its back, stretched out its paws, and purring, offered every part of its body to the Cossack, who washed him as complacently as a mother the cage and would have repeated the hazardous experiment upon with difficulty.

THE CURFEW BELL,-It will be remembered that the curlew is commonly said to have been introduced into England by William the Conqueror. By that monarch it was ordained, under severe penalties, that when the curfew bell rang at 8 o'clock in the evening all lights and fires should be extinguished. There are those who hold that this was merely the enforcing of an existing and very common police regulation to that effect. The absolute prohibition of lights after the ringing of the curfew bell was abolished by Henry I. in the year 1100, but the practice of tolling a bell at a fixed hour in the evening was continued, and this, which is still extant in some places, is a surviyal of the curfew of medieval times. At first the common hour was 7 o'clock, then it was gradually advanced to 8, and in some places to 9 o'clock; indeed, in Scotland, 10 oclock was not an unusual hour. The curtew was a regulation most useful in those early days, when it was the custom to place the fire in a hole in the middle of the floor under an opening in the roof, to allow the escape of the smoke. When the family retired for the night, the fire was extinguished by covering or curiew. The regulation was thus preventing night brawls in the popular tradition that the severity







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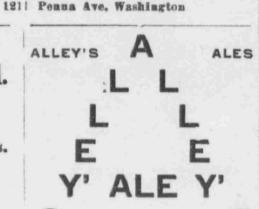
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